

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-7, 9-17, 19, and 21-26 are pending in the present application.

This Amendment is in response to the non-final Office Action mailed June 22, 2011. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 9-11, 13, 19, 21, and 23-26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b); claims 3, 5, 6, 12, 14-17, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a); and objected to claim 7 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has amended claims 1, 9, 11, 14, 23, and 26, and canceled claims 2, 6, and 7. Reconsideration in light of the amendment and remarks made herein is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication of allowance subject matter. In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 7 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to include all of the pertinent elements recited in dependent claims 6 and 7 and has canceled claims 6 and 7. Further, Applicant has amended independent claims 9, 11, 14, 23, and 26 to recite elements from claim 7 deemed to be allowable subject matter by the Examiner.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that independent claims 1, 9, 11, 14, 23, and 26 and claims dependent thereon be allowed.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 9-11, 13, 19, 21, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,387,607 issued to Gauthier et al. ("Gauthier"); and claims 23-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,485,828 issued to Hauser ("Hauser"). Applicant respectfully disagrees. However, in light of the amendments to the claims to include allowable subject matter as indicated by the Examiner, Applicant submits that that further discussions on the grounds of traverse are moot.

Therefore, Applicant believes that amended independent claims 1, 23, and 26 and their respective dependent claims are distinguishable over the cited prior art references. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 3, 6, 14-16, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gauthier in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,231,426 issued to Sweet ("Sweet"); claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gauthier in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,751,530 issued to Elrod ("Elrod"); claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gauthier in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,372,126 issued to Blau ("Blau"); claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gauthier in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,231,426 issued to Sweet ("Sweet") as applied to claim 14 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,205,999 issued to Ivri ("Ivri"). Applicant respectfully disagrees. However, in light of the amendments to the claims to include allowable subject matter as indicated by the Examiner, Applicant submits that that further discussions on the grounds of traverse are moot.

Therefore, Applicant believes that independent claims 1, 9, 11, 23, and 26 and their respective dependent claims are distinguishable over the cited prior art references. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: October 19, 2011

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